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342 "The dwellings of the Upper Creeks [i. e., the Creeks proper, exclusive of the Seminole] consist of little squares, or rather of four dwelling-houses inclosing a square area, exactly on the plan of the Public Square. Every family, however, has not four of these houses; some have but three, others not more than two, and some but one, according to the circumstances of the individual, or the number of his family. Those who have four buildings have a particular use for each building. One serves as a cook room and winter lodging-house, another as a summer lodging-house and hall for receiving visitors, and a third for a granary or provision house, etc. The last is commonly two stories high, and divided into two apartments,

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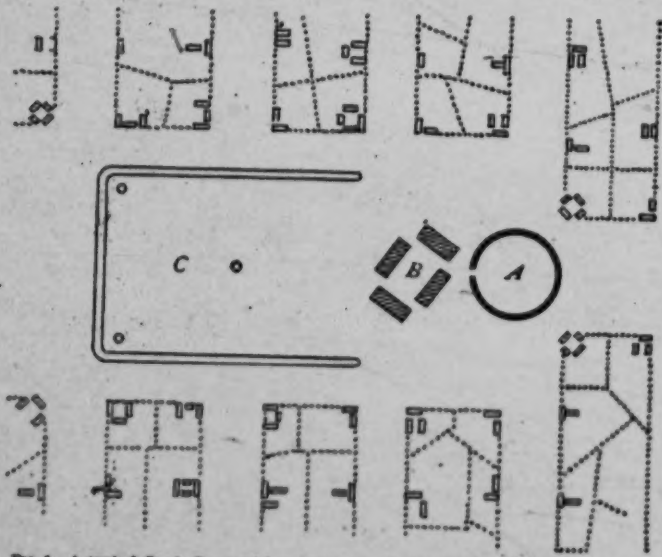


FIG. 1.—A typical Creek Ceremonial or Busk Ground, showing its relation to the town. (After Bartram.)

transversely, the lower story of one end being a potato house, for keeping such other roots and fruits as require to be kept close, or defended from cold in winter. The chamber over it is the *council*. At the other end of this building, both upper and lower stories are open on their sides; the lower story serves for a shed for their saddles, pack-saddles, and gears, and other lumber; the loft over it is a very spacious, airy, pleasant pavilion, where the chief of the family reposes in the hot seasons, and receives his guests, etc. The fourth house (which completes the square) is a skin or ware-house, if the proprietor is a wealthy man, and engaged in trade or traffic, where he keeps his deer-skins, furs, merchandise, etc., and treats his customers. Smaller

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or less wealthy families make one, two, or three houses serve all their purposes as well as they can.

"The Lower Creeks or Seminoles are not so regular or ingenious in their building, either public or private. They have neither the Chunky-Yard nor Rotunda, and the Public Square is an imperfect one, having but two or three houses at furthest. Indeed they do not require it; as their towns are small, and consequently their councils just sufficient for the government or regulation of the town or little tribe: for in all great and public matters they are influenced by the Nation, or Upper Creeks.

"Their private habitations consist generally of two buildings: one a large oblong house, which serves for a cook room, eating-house, and lodging-rooms, in three apartments under one roof; the other not quite so large, which is situated eight or ten yards distant, one end opposite the principal house. This is two stories high, of the same construction, and serving the same purpose with the granary or provision house of the Upper Creeks." [84]

Each of these groups of buildings was evidently occupied by one family, and we must suppose the houses of daughters—when they had establishments of their own, which was not always the case—were those adjoining in the same "block" or district. The houses of the more elaborate pattern have long been out of use and forgotten, with the removal of the Indians to Oklahoma (pl. 13, *c*). A corncrib of modest dimensions may still be found near some of the houses of the old type, and it is usually on the cleared space about the house. "The cookroom and winter lodging house" was the equivalent of the "hot house" of other writers, though the ancient form had perhaps been considerably altered. The ground plan of this house is usually described as roughly circular, but Romans, in comparing the dwellings of the Creeks with those of the Chickasaw and Choctaw, says: "They live nearly in the same kind of habitations as the two other nations already mentioned, except that their hot houses are not circular but oblong squares." [85] In ancient times a public and a private house of this character were shared by both Creeks and Cherokee, but in later years they were to some extent given up by the Creeks, who did not feel the need of them so keenly in their comparatively warm climate, while the Cherokee held to them much longer.

Among the Alabama the yard (tā'ăle), that anciently surrounded every house, was roughly square but was broader in front of and behind the house than at the sides. The yard was not fenced in primitive times but was sedulously cleared of grass by means of hoes. Otherwise it was thought that sickness was likely to attack the household.

[84] Bartram in Trans. Am. Eth. Soc., vol. III, pp. 56-58.
[85] Romans, Nat. Hist. E. and W. Florida, p. 86.

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household. Sometimes the house had a porch in front, as is usually the case at the present day. The corncrib was in one part of the yard, it did not matter which, and, as in the case of the Creeks, houses were also put up there for married daughters of the house owner. His sons went elsewhere to live with their wives. When the husband of one of these daughters killed a deer he would send some of the meat to his father-in-law, but the several families did not cook at one fire or live in any sort of communism.

### SEATING IN THE CEREMONIAL GROUNDS

When we consult the narratives of the De Soto expedition we find that they speak as if it were usual to find artificial mounds in the center of Indian settlements, the mounds sometimes bearing buildings. Garcilasso has the following to say regarding these:

"The town and the house of the cacique Ossachile were like those of all the other caciques of Florida. Therefore, without making a particular description of this place and this house, it seems proper to give only a general idea of all the capitals and all the houses of the chiefs of the country. I will say then that the Indians endeavor to place their towns upon elevated places. But because, in Florida, they rarely meet this sort of place where they can find the necessary conveniences to build, they raise themselves eminences in this manner. They choose a place where they bring a quantity of earth which they elevate into a kind of platform, two or three pikes high; the top of which is capable of containing ten or twelve or fifteen or twenty houses to lodge the cacique with his family and all his retinue. They then trace, at the bottom of this elevation, a square place conformable to the extent of the village which they would make; and around this place the most important persons build their dwellings. The common people lodge in the same manner; and thus they all environ the house of their chief. In order to ascend to it they draw, in a straight line, streets from top to bottom; each one fifteen or twenty feet wide, and unite them to each other with large posts, which enter very deep into the earth and which serve for walls to these streets. Then they make the stairs with strong beams which they put across, and which they square and join in order that the work may be more even. The steps of these stairs are seven or eight feet wide; so that horses ascend and descend them without difficulty. However, the Indians steepen all the other sides of the platform, with the exception of the stairs, so that they cannot ascend to it; and the dwelling of the chief is sufficiently strong."[a]

Garcilasso's figures frequently need to be divided by from 5 to 10, but there may very well have been some such structure as this since we know that the houses of the Natchez chiefs were elevated on

[a] Shipp's Garcilasso, pp. 300-301.

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mounds, along with their ossuaries, as well as the town houses of the Cherokee, though 10 to 20 houses are rather too many to assign to them. The main fact is confirmed, however, by Biedma, who, in speaking of the cross set up at Casqui, says "it is the custom of the Caciques to have near their houses a high hill, made by hand, some having the houses placed thereon."[67] This mound at Casqui is also mentioned by the Fidalgo of Elvas.[68] Ranjel says that the Spaniards set up a cross on the mound of a small village under a chief called Ichisi, somewhere in southern Georgia.[69] Further on he tells us that the "house of worship" of Talimeco, near the lower Savannah, was "on a high mound."[70] In speaking of the town of Uçita, in Florida, Elvas states that "the chief's house stood near the beach, upon a high mount made by hand for defence."[71] Plazas or squares are also referred to several times. Elvas speaks of the town yard of Napetaca, the town yard of Achese, and the town yard of Chicaça.[72] When the Spaniards entered Athahachi to meet Taaluça, Ranjel says "the chief was on a kind of balcony on a mound at one side of the square."[73] These references show that at that time each town of any importance had a kind of public square and often a mound near by surmounted by public buildings or the residence of the chief. These references, but particularly the last, suggest the ancient arrangement of the Creek square ground as thus described by Bartram:

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"The subjoined plan (fig. 2) will illustrate the form and character of these yards.

"*A*, the great area, surrounded by terraces or banks.

"*B*, a circular eminence, at one end of the yard, commonly nine or ten feet higher than the ground round about. Upon this mound stands the great *Rotunda*, *Hot House*, or *Winter Council House*, of the present Creeks. It was probably designed and used by the ancients who constructed it, for the same purpose.

"*C*, a square terrace or eminence, about the same height with the circular one just described, occupying a position at the other end of the yard. Upon this stands the *Public Square*.

"The banks inclosing the yard are indicated by the letters *b*, *b*, *b*, *b*; *c* indicates the '*Chunk-Pole*,' and *d*, *d*, the '*Slave-Posts*.'

"Sometimes the square, instead of being open at the ends, as shown in the plan, is closed upon all sides by the banks. In the lately built, or new Creek towns, they do not raise a mound for the foundation of their Rotundas or Public Squares. The yard, however, is retained, and the public buildings occupy nearly the same

[67] Bourne's Narr. of De Soto, vol. II, pp. 27–28.
[68] Ibid., vol. I, p. 120.
[69] Ibid., vol. II, p. 88.
[70] Ibid., p. 103.
[71] Ibid., p. 23.
[72] Ibid., vol. I, pp. 44, 86, 102.
[73] Ibid., vol. II, p. 120.

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cabin made expressly for the purpose; each one places himself there in accordance with his rank, and has a right to speak in his turn according to his age, his capacity, his wisdom, and the service which he has rendered to the fatherland.

"The Grand Chief of the tribe opens the session in a speech which recounts the history or the tradition of their country; he recalls the military exploits of his ancestors who have signalized themselves in the defense of the fatherland, exhorting his subjects to imitate their virtues, by bearing patiently human wants and miseries, above everything in not murmuring at all against the Great Spirit, who is master of the life of all the beings here below; and in sustaining adversities with courage; finally in sacrificing all for love of the fatherland and liberty; it being a thousand times more glorious to die like a true man than to live as a vile slave.

"The chief having stopped speaking, the oldest noble old man rises, salutes his sovereign, and makes a speech, his body bare to the belt; the water runs from all parts of his body, on account of the heat and the action which he puts into his declamation, with natural gestures and metaphors which express his thought; he persuades his hearers to believe all that he says by the force and eloquence of his speech. Nothing is more instructive than these assemblies; one hears no chatter there, no indecency, no misplaced plaudits, nor immoderate laughter. The young people are very circumspect there, and attentive to listen with respect to the words of the old men, persuaded that it is for their good."[a]

Other evidence contradicts the statement that there was any one capital of the nation, and we know that the council house was nothing more than the tcokofa of the town in which the assembly happened to take place. Nevertheless Coweta and Tukabahchee, particularly the former, seem to have been favorite meeting places, facts indicated by Milfort in several places. The following description by him has particular reference to an assembly in Coweta:

"The assemblies of the nation usually take place in the principal town. In the center of this town is outlined a perfect and very extensive square; in each angle of this square are constructed three cabins of different sizes, forming in all twelve cabins. This square has four openings by which its center may be reached, and all of the cabins are so close together that from one of them one can see into all of the others. Each of them may hold from forty to sixty persons.

"That of the grand chief of the nation faces the rising sun, to indicate that he ought always to watch over the interests of the nation. At one side of this cabin, and in the same angle, is that called the grand cabin, where the general assemblies of the nation are held.

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[a] Romans, Narr. Voy., vol. II, pp. 70-72.

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642 "In the angle opposite are three other cabins; these belong to the old men, and face the setting sun, to indicate that they are on the decline, and that they must no longer march to battle. In the two other angles are the cabins of the different chiefs of the nation; they are larger or smaller according to the services they have rendered.

"All these cabins are painted red with the exception of the three facing the setting sun, which are always white, symbol of virtue and age.

"The cabins painted red are, in time of war, ornamented with many pieces of wood by way of decoration, which support a kind of chain made of wooden rings. This is a sign of sadness, informing the warriors that the motherland has need of them, and that they must be prepared to march at the first signal. In time of peace these links are replaced with garlands of ivy leaves.

"The three cabins of the old men are at all times ornamented with these garlands, mingled with flowers."

He adds that the square was very large, and then proceeds as follows:

642 "I have already said that the chiefs of the nation must assemble every year in the month of May, and consider everything of importance to the nation, both internally and externally. When they are all at the rendezvous, called the grand cabin, of which I have just spoken, the assembly is called to order; and, when it is called to order (*formée*), none of those who compose it can go out from its compass until all of the business of the nation is concluded. The president alone may absent himself for some minutes; but he is obliged, like all of the others, to pass his days and nights in the assembly, and to be present at all of the deliberations.

"During the period of the assembly no one is allowed to approach the grand cabin nearer than twenty paces. Only the chiefs of the warriors are admitted there; the subordinate chiefs who are present are intended to serve the others, but they have no voice in the deliberations. The women are charged with the duty of preparing the necessary food and drink for the assembly; the subordinate chiefs go to fetch the provisions and place them in their turn in the grand cabin for the members of the assembly.

"In the center of the square formed by the cabin, a fire is lighted which burns continually. At sunset the young people of both sexes assemble, and come to dance around this fire until an appointed hour; during this time the assembly separates, and each member repairs, if he desires, to the cabin appropriate to the rank which he has received; or he remains in the grand cabin, and there enjoys the dance and the amusements of the young people; but without being allowed to go outside of the compass of the square, so long as the business is not entirely concluded. When the dances, which must

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In the Yuchi calendar recorded by Doctor Speck five months agree with those in Swan's list, with but slight variation, both in name and in the period of the year to which they were applied. It seems rather curious that these all belonged to the summer series.[54]

Adair says of the Indians of his acquaintance: "They pay great regard to the first appearance of every new moon, and, on the occasion, always repeat some joyful sounds, and stretch out their hands toward her—but at such times they offer no public sacrifice." [55] And in another place he remarks that they "annually observed their festivals . . . at a prefixed time of a certain moon." [56]

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House building was a social affair and was distributed between the spring and fall. Adair gives a very lively account of the operation.

"While the memory of the bleak pinching winds lasts, and they are covered with their winter-blackened skins, they turn out early in the spring, to strip clap-boards and cypress-bark, for the covering of their houses: but in proportion as the sun advances, they usually desist from their undertaking during that favourable season; saying, 'that in the time of warm weather, they generally plant in the fields, or go to war; and that building houses in the troublesome hot summer, is a needless and foolish affair, as it occasions much sweating,'—which is the most offensive thing in life to every red warrior of manly principles. On this account, if we except the women chopping firewood for daily use, it is as rare to hear the sound of an ax in their countries, as if they lived under the inhospitable torrid zone; or were nearly related to the South-American animal Pigritia, that makes two or three days journey in going up a tree, and is as long in returning. When the cold weather approaches, they return to their work, and necessity forces them then to perform what a timely precaution might have executed with much more ease. When they build, the whole town, and frequently the nearest of their tribe in neighboring towns, assist one another, well knowing that many hands make speedy work of that, which would have discouraged any of them from ever attempting by himself. In one day, they build, daub with their tough mortar mixed with dry grass, and thoroughly finish, a good commodious house.[57]

"They first trace the dimensions of the intended fabric and every one has his task prescribed him after the exactest manner."[58]

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There was, of course, nothing like a week among them in olden times, though Bartram assures us that the Creeks at one of the towns through which he passed remained quietly in their houses on Sunday out of respect to the white people.[59] The Alabama have the following

[54] Speck, in Anthr. Publs. Univ. Mus., Univ. Pa., vol. i, p. 67.
[55] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 78.
[56] Ibid., pp. 99-100.
[57] But see p. 372.
[58] Adair, op. cit., p. 417.
[59] Bartram, Travels, p. 433.

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a. Drum

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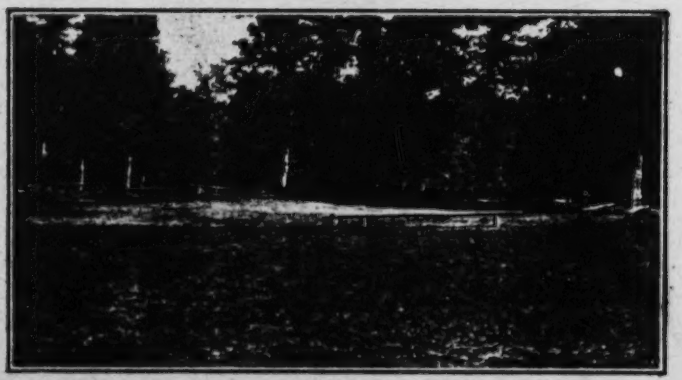

b. Ceremonial ground near Bragg, Okla., used by the Natchez, Creek, and Cherokee Indians

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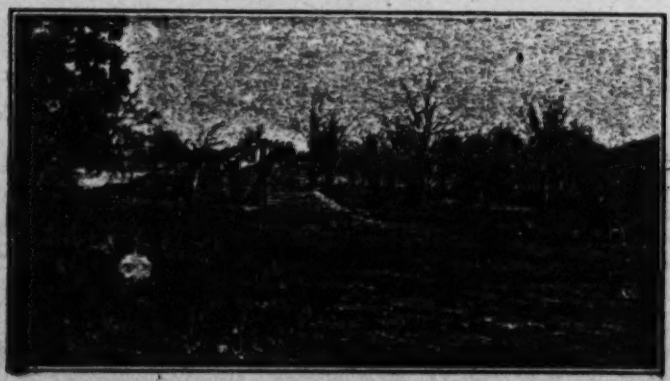

c. Home of the Kila or Prophet Yahola



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